

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

March 20, 1971

MEMORANDUM OF BRIEFING

PRESENT: Henry A. Kissinger
Colonel Kennedy
David R. Young (Note Taker)

SUBJECT: Laos (Lamson 719)
Cambodia (Toan Thang) 01/71

BRIEFER: Lt. Colonel Martin

DATE: March 17, 1971

LAOS

Martin: I have some good news.

Kissinger: What I want to know about is the weather in the North.

Martin: It is still clouded in. 914 is cut, 234 is not motorable and they have not upgraded it yet; 233, however, is open. If they proceed with their plan they will be able to cut them off.

Kissinger: What do you mean the plan? Are they staying or moving out?

Martin: They are moving down in a south/southeasterly direction from Tchepone.

Kissinger: Well, how long will it take before they get out; how long will the roads be cut?

Martin: Well, it will take them through the dry season, probably another six to eight weeks.

Kissinger: That's what I want.

(Martin during this exchange a couple of times protested giving details on the plan. He said that his boss wanted to brief Kissinger. Kissinger said he realized that and that he had been briefed, he just wanted to know

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exactly what it meant and what Martin personally thought.)

Martin: Some of the good news was the number of caches 2,000 82mm rounds were found in one particular place and body counts from 11 to 17 in a number of other small contacts. One cache involved 232 barracks and over 300 barrels of POL. These are on the edge of Binh Tram 31. As they are moving into this area they are picking up more and more caches.

Kissinger: What is the sensor report?

Martin: Again, good news in that there is no traffic on 914-C. 914-B has 81 southbound traffic, but this is primarily the internal traffic of the Binh Tram.

Kissinger: What about the replacement troops?

Martin: A regiment is on standby. They are not going to replace man for man per se, but are waiting until they are needed. I do not think there is any need to get excited.

Kissinger: But, that means they are not really going in.

Martin: Well, I think it will depend on what the need is.

CAMBODIA

Martin: Again good news here. They have made contact with the enemy in the Chup Plantation, there were 39 enemy KIA. There are also gunships north of Chup that have gotten a number of enemy. On Snoul, they have finally moved out a bit. However, they are moving out between the three enemy units that were beginning to surround them but at least they were moving out.

Kissinger: How fast did Tri move? I had the impression that he was moving faster than these guys. Was I right or wrong?

Martin: You were right, Tri moved faster than these fellows.

Kissinger: How did he manage to get them to move so much faster?

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Martin: He told them what the objective was and gave them a time in which they had to get to it. But there is a certain balance to be achieved here between going too fast and not doing a thorough job and going too slow and not making contact with the enemy. At least they have made contact with the enemy in the Chup.

Kennedy: It may well be the strategy of the enemy to avoid contact and that is why they are scurrying out of the way.

Kissinger: That does seem to be the case.

End of Briefing.

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